

Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 4848

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, IS, US, OREP (JAVITS, JACOB K)
SUBJECT: SENATOR JAVITS' MEETING WITH BEGIN

1. SUMMARY: IN A MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER BEGIN ON JULY 4, SENATOR JAVITS SAID BEGIN'S EARLY STATEMENTS AFTER ASSUMING OFFICE HAD CAUSED A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF WORRY AMONG ISRAEL'S SUPPORTERS IN THE U.S. HE EMPHASIZED THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT WOULD BE OF CRITICAL IMPORTANCE IN ITS TIMING AND THAT BEGIN SHOULD NOT CONSIDER IT AS A PRELIMINARY MEETING, BUT SHOULD BE SPECIFIC ON THE OUTSTANDING ISSUES. HE NOTED THAT THE U.S. IS THE ONLY SUBSTANTIAL FRIEND ISRAEL HAS AND CONVEYED HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE STATE OF U.S. PUBLIC AND CONGRESSIONAL OPINION.

2. BEGIN SAID THAT HE WAS GOING WITH HOPE IN HIS HEART AND THAT HE WAS ENCOURAGED BY THE PRESIDENT'S MORATORIUM ON MIDDLE EAST STATEMENTS. HE SAID HIS CHIEF CONCERN, AND ISRAEL'S MAIN PROBLEM, IS NATIONAL SECURITY AND IN ISRAEL'S CASE THAT MEANT NO ABSTRACT CONCEPT, BUT RATHER ENSURING THAT THE LIFE OF NO JEWISH CHILD IS AGAIN THREATENED. HE ALSO PLEDGED THAT ISRAEL WILL CONTINUE TO HELP THE CHRISTIAN MINORITY IN LEBANON BECAUSE ISRAEL KNOWS WHAT IT IS TO BE A MINORITY IN THE
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PAGE 02 TEL AV 04848 01 OF 02 051318Z

MIDDLE EAST. BEGIN STRESSED THAT ISRAEL WANTS TO NEGOTIATE A PEACE TREATY WITH ITS NEIGHBORS, AND IT IS PREPARED TO BEGIN THESE NEGOTIATIONS IN OCTOBER - WITHOUT AN PRE- OR PRIOR CONDITIONS. HE SAID THE CABINET WOULD DECIDE COLLECTIVELY WHAT HE IS TO PROPOSE TO THE PRESIDENT AND HE WILL BE BOUND BY THAT DECISION, ALTHOUGH HIS PERSONAL PREFERENCE WOULD BE TO BRING SPECIFIC

PROPOSALS. HE WAS OBVIOUSLY DISPLEASED Y THE DEPART-
MENT'S STATEMENT OF JUNE 27 BUT WAS WELL SATISFIED WITH
THE PRESS SPOKESMAN'S CLARIFICATION ON JUNE 28 REGARDING
THE NATURE OF PEACE. END SUMMARY.

3. SENATOR JAVITS OPENED THE DISCUSSION BY NOTING THE
PRESIDENT'S GREAT FRIENDSHIP, SUPPORT, AND ADMIRATION
FOR ISRAEL. HE SAID HE BELIEVED THAT THE PRESIDENT AND
BEGIN WILL LIKE EACH OTHER AND WILL GET ALONG WELL
TOGETHER, AND THIS IS IMPORTANT.

4. THE SENATOR CONVEYED TO BEGIN HIS ASSESSMENT OF THE
STATE OF U.S. CONGRESSIONAL SENTIMENTS, AND THE SENTI-
MENTS OF THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMUNITY, ON U.S.-ISRAEL
RELATIONS IN THE SAME TERMS AS HE HAD TO PRESIDENT
CARTER, VICE PRESIDENT MONDALE AND SECRETARY
VANCE IN WASHINGTON. WHILE THERE WAS NOT YET ANY
SERIOUS EROSION OF SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL AMONG THE PEOPLE
OR IN THE CONGRESS, THE TREE OF CONFIDENCE HAD BEEN
SHAKEN. AS AN ESTIMATE OF WHAT HAD OCCURRED, THE
SENATOR RECALLED THAT HE HAD MUSTERED 76 SENATORS TO
SIGN THE LETTER OF SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL IN 1974 WHILE TODAY
THAT FIGURE WOULD PROBABLY BE TWO-THIRDS OF THE SENATE.

5. JAVIT'S THIRD POINT WAS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE
TIMING OF THE VISIT. THE PRIME MINISTER IS A NEW FACTOR
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PAGE 03 TEL AV 04848 01 OF 02 051318Z

TO THE PRESIDENT, MANY LEGISLATORS, AND TO THE PEOPLE
BUT THERE ARE SEVERAL TIME PARAMETERS WHICH MAKE THE
VISIT URGENTLY DECISIVE: THE PRESIDENT IS DEEPLY COM-
MITTED TO MOVING FORWARD WITHOUT DELAY TOWARD A MIDDLE
EAST PEACE. WHEN HE MEETS THE PRIME MINISTER, HE WILL
EXPECT BEGIN TO BE DEFINITIVE. REALIZING BEGIN HAS DEEP
CONVICTIONS, THE SENATOR UNDERSTOOD HE WOULD TRY TO
PERSUADE THE PRESIDENT OF THE RIGHTNESS OF HIS CAUSE. IF
HE DID NOT, HE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO HAVE AN EXTRA
MEETING OR STAY AN EXTRA DAY TO DISCUSS THE POINTS OF
DISAGREEMENT; BEGIN SHOULD NOT SAY HE WOULD THINK IT OVER
AND RETURN LATER - THERE MAY NOT BE TIME FOR THAT.

6. FINALLY, THE SENATOR SAID, BEGIN MUST BE REALISTIC.
HE MUST BE AWARE THAT ISRAEL DOES NOT HAVE MANY FRIENDS
IN THE WORLD. THE U.S. IS THE ONLY SUBSTANTIAL FRIEND
AND OTHERS ARE FRIENDLY ONLY BECAUSE OF THE U.S. THIS
FACTOR MUST BE CAREFULLY JUDGED. ISRAEL'S STRUGGLE
WITH THE ARABS MUST NOT BE TRANSFORMED INTO A STRUGGLE
WITH THE U.S. BEGIN MUST REMEMBER THAT MUCH HAS
HAPPENED IN THE THREE DECADES HE HAS BEEN IN
OPPOSITION. THE SITUATION IS SERIOUS, BUT NOT GRIM,

AND THE MOMENT IS DECISIVE.

7. BEGIN OPENED HIS RESPONSE BY SAYING THAT HE WAS GRATEFUL FOR THE SENATOR'S ADVICE AND HE ACCEPTED MANY OF ITS MAIN POINTS. HE IS GOING TO WASHINGTON WITH HOPE IN HIS HEART AND ENCOURAGED BY THE WARMTH OF THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE OF CONGRATULATIONS TO HIM ON BECOMING PRIME MINISTER. HE CITED THE FINAL SENTENCE OF THE MESSAGE FROM MEMORY AND SAID HE PLANNED TO RECIPROCATE ITS WARMTH.

8. BEGIN SAID HE DID NOT MUCH CARE FOR THE DEPARTMENT'S STATEMENT OF JUNE 27, ALTHOUGH SOME GOOD HAD COME OF IT WHEN THE PRESIDENT HAD DECIDED THERE SHOULD BE NO MORE CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 TEL AV 04848 01 OF 02 051318Z

STATEMENTS UNTIL THE GUEST ARRIVED AND HAD A CHANCE TO SPEAK FOR HIMSELF. IN THE FOUR YEARS WHICH HE HOPED TO SERVE, HIS MAIN GOAL WILL BE TO MAKE SURE THAT THE LIFE OF NO JEWISH CHILD CAN BE THREATENED. THIS IS THE MEANING OF NATIONAL SECURITY TO ISRAEL, WHOSE ENEMIES ARE STILL TRYING TO CREATE CONDITIONS TO ENABLE THEM TO DESTROY THE COUNTRY. AS A NATION OF SURVIVORS AND CHILDREN OF SURVIVORS, ISRAEL MUST AVOID A REPETITION OF THE DESTRUCTION OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE. NATIONAL

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 04848 02 OF 02 051356Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEL AVIV 4848

EXDIS

SECURITY FOR ISRAEL IS NOT AN EXCUSE FOR EXPANSION NOR ANYTHING ELSE OTHER THAN THE PRESERVATION OF ITS CHILDREN. ISRAEL WAS FIRST ATTACKED IN 1920 AND LAST IN 1973 AND HAS ALWAYS BEEN UNDER TRIAL.

9. BEGIN TURNED TO ME AT THIS POINT TO EMPHASIZE THAT "ISRAEL IS A MINORITY SURROUNDED BY ARMED ENEMIES." AS SUCH, IT IS DEEPLY CONCERNED WITH THE FATE OF ANOTHER MINORITY, THE CHRISTIANS IN LEBANON. ISRAEL WILL NOT ACQUIESCE IN ANY ATTEMPT TO DESTROY THAT MINORITY, WHICH HAS THE SAME RIGHTS AS THE MOSLEM MAJORITY. THE U.S. SHOULD NOT WORRY ABOUT ISRAELI TERRITORIAL GOALS. HE EMPHASIZED THAT ISRAEL HAD ABSOLUTELY NO INTENTION OF OCCUPYING ANY LEBANESE TERRITORY. BUT THE U.S. SHOULD BE AWARE THAT ISRAEL WILL HELP THE CHRISTIANS IN LEBANON, AND NOT PERMIT THEM TO BE DESTROYED.

10. HIS FINAL POINT WAS THAT ISRAEL TRULY WANTS TO NEGOTIATE WITH ITS NEIGHBORS TO CONCLUDE A PEACE TREATY. THE WAY TO ESTABLISH PEACE IS THROUGH A TREATY WITH ARTICLES WHICH TERMINATE THE STATE OF WAR, DEFINE TERRITORY AND BOUNDARIES, AND DESCRIBE THE ESSENCE OF PEACE, AS HAS BEEN TRADITIONAL IN NEARLY ALL PEACE TREATIES. HE WAS PLEASED TO NOTE IN THE DEPARTMENT'S SPOKESMAN'S SECOND STATEMENT LAST WEEK THAT THERE

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TEL AV 04848 02 OF 02 051356Z

SHOULD BE A PEACE TREATY AT SOME STAGE. HE ALSO RECALLED THE WORDING OF THE DEMOCRATIC PARTY PLATFORM WHICH CALLED FOR FACE-TO-FACE DIRECT NEGOTIATIONS WITHOUT EXTERNALLY DEVISED FORMULAS TO SEEK PEACE.

11. IN THESE NEGOTIATIONS, BEGIN SAID, THERE CAN BE NO PRE-CONDITIONS OR PRIOR CONDITIONS. WHEN SADAT SAYS THERE MUST BE TOTAL WITHDRAWAL, LET HIM PROPOSE THAT AT GENEVA, BUT HE SHOULD NOT REQUIRE ISRAEL TO AGREE TO IT IN ADVANCE. SIMILARLY, ISRAEL CANNOT SAY, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT OTHER PARTIES MUST AGREE IN ADVANCE THAT JERUSALEM MUST REMAIN UNITED, ALTHOUGH THERE IS A NATIONAL CONSENSUS ON THAT POINT IN ISRAEL. ISRAEL IS PREPARED TO MEET IN GENEVA ON OCTOBER 10. AFTER THE HIGH HOLY DAYS. HE AND DAYAN WOULD BOTH GO; HE WOULD MAKE THE OPENING STATEMENT AND DAYAN WOULD STAY TO NEGOTIATE. ISRAEL WANTS PEACE AND NEGOTIATIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS, ABOVE ALL ELSE.

12. THE SENATOR THEN PREDICTED THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WOULD BE PLEASED TO HEAR THESE VIEWS, BUT WILL ASK WHAT IS NECESSARY FOR ISRAEL'S SECURITY IF IT IS TO BE PERSUADED TO GIVE UP TERRITORY. THE PRESIDENT HAS

BEEN ENGAGED IN PUBLIC DIPLOMACY AND BEGIN MAY WISH TO INDICATE HIS UNDERSTANDING ABOUT WHAT CAN AND CANNOT BE PUBLICLY DISCLOSED. BEGIN REPLIED THAT OUT OF RESPECT TO THE PRESIDENT, HE MUST WAIT TO DISCLOSE ONLY TO HIM THE ISRAELI VIEWS OF WHAT IS POSSIBLE REGARDING THE THREE GEOGRAPHIC FRONTS.

13. BEGIN WENT ON TO SAY THAT HE WILL PRESENT THE CABINET'S VIEWS WHEN HE SEES THE PRESIDENT. THE CABINET WILL REACH ITS DECISION NEXT WEEK AND HE WOULD CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEL AV 04848 02 OF 02 051356Z

BE BOUND BY IT IN HIS TALKS IN WASHINGTON. THE CABINET MIGHT DECIDE THAT HE CAN ONLY SPEAK OF PROCEDURES NOW, AND RESERVE SUBSTANTIVE PROPOSALS FOR GENEVA, ALTHOUGH HE WILL PERSONALLY ASK FOR A MANDATE WHICH WOULD ALLOW HIM TO MAKE SPECIFIC SUBSTANTIVE PROPOSALS, AS I AND SENATOR JAVITS HAVE URGED HIM TO DO. SENATOR JAVITS REPLIED THAT THE PRESIDENT WILL EXPECT SPECIFICS AND WILL BE DISAPPOINTED IF HE DOES NOT HEAR THEM.

14. I THEN RETURNED TO BEGIN'S DISCUSSION OF PRE-CONDITIONS AND ASKED WHETHER SOME OF HIS EARLIER STATEMENTS DID NOT AMOUNT TO PRE-CONDITIONS; FOR EXAMPLE, SAYING THAT 97 PERCENT OF THE ELECTORATE ARE OPPOSED TO AN INDEPENDENT PALESTINIAN STATE AND THAT ISRAEL COULD NEVER ACCEPT SUCH A STATE. HE RESPONDED THAT EVERYTHING IS NEGOTIABLE AND THERE ARE NO ULTIMATUMS ANY OUTCOME WHICH IS ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES IS CONCEIVABLE.

15. COMMENT: WE HAVE REPORTED THIS CONVERSATION IN SOME DETAIL BECAUSE WE BELIEVE IT CLEARLY REPRESENTS BEGIN'S THINKING AS HE PREPARES FOR WASHINGTON. WE BELIEVE HIS REFERENCE TO THE COLLEGIAL AUTHORITY OF THE CABINET IS SOMEWHAT DISINGENUOUS, GIVEN HIS FIRM CONTROL. IF THE CABINET GIVES HIM ONLY LIMITED NEGOTIATING AUTHORITY, IT WILL LIKELY BE THE RESULT OF A DECISION BY BEGIN HIMSELF. HOWEVER, SENATOR JAVITS PUT THE ISSUE TO HIM CLEARLY AND FORCEFULLY, AND I BELIEVE IT MADE SOME IMPACT - BASED ON BEGIN'S COMMENT TO ME LATER IN THE DAY AT OUR FOURTH OF JULY RECEPTION. I WILL SEE HIM FOR A FURTHER DISCUSSION ON FRIDAY, JULY 8. END COMMENT.

16. THIS MESSAGE HAS BEEN CLEARED BY CODEL.
LEWIS

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Message Attributes

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